

Remarks Announcing the Bush-Quayle Candidacies for Reelection

February 12, 1992

The President. Thank you all very much. And Barbara, thank you for those kind remarks. And may I salute our Vice President, Dan Quayle, just back from overseas, and Marilyn. And my respects to the members of our great Cabinet, and friends all. Thanks to all of you for this wonderful, warm reception.

I have an announcement to make. [Laughter] I want to continue serving as your President, 4 more years. So from this moment on, I'm a candidate for President of the United States, officially.

Let me tell you why I'm running. I came here to do important work, and I finish what I start. In 1980 I came to Washington as a part of a team. We started a revolution to free America from, you remember, the politics of malaise and to set sail toward America's destiny. Then in 1988, Dan Quayle and I began our own partnership built on the same principles.

My message then and my message now is simple: I believe Government is too big, and it costs too much. I believe in a strong defense for this country and good schools, safe streets, a Government really worthy of the people. I believe that parents, not Government, should make the important decisions about health, child care, and education. I believe in personal responsibility. I believe in opportunity for all. We should throw open wide the doors of possibility to anyone who has been locked out. And I believe in a piece of wisdom passed on by my favorite political philosopher, Barbara Bush: What happens in your house is more important than what happens in the White House.

You see, America's future doesn't take shape in small rooms with heavy, polished wooden desks. It takes place in homes, where parents read to their children, talk about responsibility, teach them values, show them how to love one another, respect one another, and work hard, and live good lives. We must encourage families to remain strong and whole. We must extend our hearts and hands to children who have no

one to hold them or call them by their names. Our future rides on the important things, the big things: Family, home, school, church, community, and country.

We're gathered here because the American people wanted leadership, and we answered the call. We didn't do the easy things. We did the right things. From day one, I fought for strong and effective national defense. I stuck to my principles, and we kept strong, and we won the cold war. And we stayed strong, and that enabled us to win a battle called Desert Storm.

But we did far more than that. We liberated the entire world from old fears, fears of tense, endless confrontation, fears of nuclear holocaust. Now our children grow up freed from the looming specter of nuclear war.

But having won the cold war, we did more. We led nations away from ancient hatreds and toward a table of peace. And we did still more than that. We forged a new world order, an order shaped by the sweat and sacrifice of our families, the sweat and sacrifice of generation upon generation of American men and women.

Think of it: Two years ago, the Berlin Wall came tumbling down. And last year, the Soviet Union collapsed. Imperial communism became a four-letter word: D-E-A-D, dead. And today, because we stood firm, because we did the right things, America stands alone, the undisputed leader of the world. We put an end to the decades of cold war and reaped a springtime harvest of peace. The American people should be proud of what together we have achieved. Now, together, we will transform the arsenal of democracy into the engine of growth.

I understand the world. That's crucial. But that's not enough. I understand America. And I know that American workers are the most productive in the world, bar none. And I know, to succeed economically at home, we need to lead economically abroad. If you want to lead in the world, you've got to know the neighborhood. Economic leadership means markets for Ameri-

can products, jobs for American workers, and growing room for the American dream. The American people do not believe in isolationism because they believe in themselves. We Americans don't hide from a good test of our abilities. We rise to the challenge. And after all, our national bird is the eagle, not the ostrich.

In 1992, the American people will decide what kind of leadership they want. They'll decide which team has the character, the experience, and the toughness to make the important decisions. They could cast their lot with a lot of fresh faces who tout stale ideas. But they won't. Voters know the difference between a sound bite and sound policy.

Let's not kid ourselves. We're in a tough fight. But you know me: I don't seek unnecessary conflict, but when principle is at stake, I fight to win. And I am determined to win. And I will win. This will be a long campaign. That's all right. Our campaign will focus on the future, the only subject that counts. We'll fight hard. We'll fight fair. And we will win.

Abraham Lincoln, whose birth we celebrate today, once told fellow Republicans, "We will make converts day by day, and unless truth be a mockery and justice a hollow lie, we will be in the majority after a while. The battle of freedom is to be fought out on principle."

And so be it. That's the way it will be. For 3 years an entrenched opposition in Washington has clung to the old failed ways, not out of principle but out of sheer politics. They blocked our comprehensive efforts to fight crime and drugs. They refused to join the revolution in American education. They stalled our efforts to cut taxes and slash regulation and encourage economic growth. And then they complained that nothing got done.

This year we say: No more. To those who want to obstruct progress, we say: Get moving, or get out of the way. We've got an agenda.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We've got an agenda, and here's what we will do: Together, we'll get

our economy up and running at full speed. We'll restore decency to the American way of life. We will silence the voices of hatred and gloom. And we will attack programs that lock people in bleak dependency as we work to reform our dismal welfare program. And we will, in the process, provide the best kind of a welfare system imaginable, good jobs for Americans able to work. And we will build the America of our dreams.

In my life, I've seen miracles, and I've learned that no dream is too big for the American heart. When I was a little boy, the world moved at an easy pace. Then came the Depression; then came a World War. And in the fires of battle, I learned freedom's painful price. And I've seen wondrous changes, new ideas and new technologies, tempered by the humanity that makes us what we are. Amid the swells of change, gentle fundamentals anchor us still. Decency, honor, hard work, caring: That's the America I know.

And I have been blessed in my life, blessed by Barbara and by a family that fills me with wonder and joy and love. And I'm blessed with so many friends, friends like you. And I have been especially blessed because I have been given the opportunity to serve as your President, the President of the United States.

The glory of this century is America. And history will call this the American century because we fought the battle of freedom, and we won. And history will tell of a second American century when we led the world to new heights of achievement and liberty. This is our legacy. This is our challenge. And this is our destiny. And together, we will win. I am certain of that.

Thank you very, very much. And may God bless you. May God bless each and every one of you and our great country, the United States of America. Thank you very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. at the J.W. Marriott Hotel.